

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are currently pending in the application. The claims have not been amended. Nevertheless, a listing of the claims in the new amendment format has been provided for the convenience of the Examiner.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8, 10, 12-14, 16-17 and 21-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Acres et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5, 741, 183). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention as recited in claims 1, 17 and 31 describes a communication multiplexer device where “the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server.” The Examiner, as described below, asserts that Acre’s describes a communication multiplexer device that is transparent to the master gaming controller. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion and will attempt to point out teaching in Acres that refute Examiner’s assertion in regards to transparency of the device identified by the Examiner.

Examiner states, “the gaming machine communicates with a plurality of game service servers” and that the communication “is accomplished by the electronic module serving as a communication multiplexer device to collect data relating to accounting information.” The Examiner states, “this communication is done with a communications multiplexer device in the form of an electronic module with a data communications node and a multi-port communication board in the form of a personality board that is connected to the master gaming controller (FIG. 2, reference 225) wherein the device is transparent to the gaming machine.” As noted by the Examiner, the electronic module, which the Examiner has equated to the communications multiplexer device, includes a data communication node. In Acres, the data communication node (DCN) includes a serial machine interface, which is used to communicate with the associated gaming device (Fig. 2, Col. 9, 45-54). Examiner states, “each gaming device is a slot machine” that has a master gaming controller.

In Acres (Fig. 13 and 16, Col. 23, 48-Col. 24, 2), step 262, which is a step in a power-up procedure for the electronic module, is described. Step 262 is called “Process Machine Serial Interface.” Step 262 is carried during power-up when communications are initialized between the electronic module and the gaming machine. In this step, the DCN polls the machine to determine its level of activity. In response, the machine will send a packet of status information indicating

the current amount of activity on the machine. When the gaming machine does not reply, the electronic module considers the gaming machine to be off-line (see FIG. 16).

When, as stated by the Examiner, the "communication is done with a communications multiplexer device in the form of an electronic module with a data communications node and a multi-port communication board in the form of a personality board that is connected to the master gaming controller," the gaming machine in Acres, and hence the master gaming controller inferred by the Examiner, knows the electronic module is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server because the electronic module directly communicates with the gaming machine during power-up in a manner that requires a reply from the master gaming controller. After power-up, the master gaming controller knows the electronic module is in the communication path for any messages it sends via the electronic module because the master gaming controller has already been polled by the electronic module for data. Therefore, the electronic module can not be said to be transparent to the master gaming controller because the initialization of communications between the gaming machine and the electronic module requires a reply from the master gaming controller or the gaming machine is considered off-line by the electronic module. For at least these reasons, Acres cannot be said to anticipate claims 1-40 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Acres in view of Alcorn et al (U.S. patent No. 6,149, 522). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 15, 18-19, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Acres (5,741,183).

The Examiner rejected claims 11 and 31-40 under as being unpatentable over Acres in view of O'Toole (U.S. Patent 6,345, 294).

All of the instant claims as amended, 1-40 describe a communication multiplexer device with a plurality of communication ports, an output communication port and processor logic. The communication multiplexer device is connected to a master gaming controller on a gaming machine and one or more game service servers and receives communications from both the one or more game servers and the master gaming controller via the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port. The communication multiplexer device controls communications between the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port. Further, the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller "allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server." The structure

and function described in the limitations of claims 1-40 are not described in the combination of references or individual references cited by the examiner.

The Examiner relies on Alcorn for methods relating to casino security and O'toole for methods relating to a boot server. Thus, the combinations of Alcorn and Acres or O'toole do not remedy the lack of transparency of the electronic module described in Acres. Further, Acres states that it is an object of the invention to reconfigure gaming devices remotely over a network to provide bonusing (Col. 2, 37-39). The data communication node communicates with the gaming device over a serial interface through which the data communication transmits reconfiguration commands (Abstract). As described above, the serial machine interface used to communicate these reconfiguration commands is non-transparent to the master gaming controller as a result of the power-up procedure. Further, Acres does not teach or suggest any methods or motivation for making the serial machine interface transparent to the master gaming controller. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Acres, Alcorn and O'toole, alone or in combination, can't be said to render obvious claims 1-40 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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